

the first old lady in line
hobbled out to help him,
moving me up a good ten minutes.

she lifted his bike from on top of him ...
but then it became too much for her,
and she dropped it on his head.
honest to God i almost laughed out loud,
and thank God i didn't
because i would surely have been caned to death.

anyway, later in the day,
i had a birthday card from my aunt in florida,
who's always been a fine, buxom, lusty gal,
and she pulled one of the great all-time Freudian
abbreviations: she said that her husband
was keeping busy in the condominium association

that, in fact, he was the "President of Ass."

i know you're thinking, "you son of a bitch,
you'll even sacrifice your dear aunt and uncle for a
laugh;
wait till you're an old duck on a bicycle!"

let me assure you that,
if you're only as old as you feel,

i'm there already.

ADONIS FOR A DAY

this sculptress did a bust of me once
and she made it look like adonis.

her boyfriend, who was a famous poet,
stuck around while i was sitting for it
and he did everything possible to distract her.

when it came out looking like adonis,
he was really pissed off,
and he told her it didn't look like me at all
and he talked her into taking my name off of it
and entering it in competitions
as "the poet idealized,"
or something like that.

but when i was about to have a book of stories out,
the publisher got in touch with her

and a picture of the bust ended up
as frontispiece.

the other night some girls who had somehow heard
about the bust asked me about it
and i had to tell them that the sculptress
had written me that she'd moved to phoenix,
opened a beer bar, installed the bust,
and inevitably the bust had gotten busted by a drunk.

but i got out the book of stories
and showed them the frontispiece.

"oh well," they agreed,
"it didn't look like you anyhow."

PEOPLE ARE LOSING THE ABILITY TO MAKE DISTINCTIONS

i would be the first to admit
that my daughters are probably
the only women i have ever loved selflessly,

but already unloved women are suggesting
to my daughters that, since i have never
loved other women selflessly, i can't be capable
of so loving them.

THE END OF AN ERA

dear brenda, i got up early and, as i had promised you,
i was at the sears store a half-hour before it opened.
there were already about three hundred people
lined up outside the tickettron entrance.
i recognized one of my students about a hundred people
ahead of me in line; he waved to me to join him.
at first i virtuously refused,
but when i noticed throngs of aging flower-children
cutting in line ahead of me,
i sidled up to him.
fortunately, the five girls behind him
declined to tear me to shreds.
at eleven the manager announced that friday was sold out.
by eleven-thirty, saturday and sunday were gone.
at noon, it was announced that only single seats remained.
a lot of people left. i stayed and moved close to the door.